

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 04295 291100Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
MCT-02 SY-05 AID-05 ACDA-12 COME-00 /088 W
-----017344 300153Z /75

R 290752Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 8959

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 4295

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, LE, SY
SUBJ: SYRIA AND LEBANON

REF: DAMASCUS 4333

1. WITH REGARD PARAGRAPH 4 REFTTEL, A LEBANESE BUSINESSMAN WHO IS WELL-KNOWN TO US AND NOT THE TYPE TO INVENT STORIES SAYS THAT LAST WEEK WHEN HE WAS IN DAMASCUS THERE WAS SHOOTING INCIDENT BETWEEN MILITIAMEN AND SOMEONE ELSE AT ENTRANCE TO DAMASCUS INTERNATIONAL FAIR. HE SAID INCIDENT QUICKLY BROUGHT UNDER CONTROL, BUT THERE NO DOUBT IT HAPPENED BECAUSE HE WAS THERE.

2. HE ALSO REPORTS BEING TOLD BY SYRIAN MINISTER OF INDUSTRY THAT IT WAS ACCEPTABLE THAT BEIRUT BE SOMEWHAT MORE IMPORTANT COMMERCIALLY THAN DAMASCUS, BUT THAT THE DISPARITY BETWEEN THE TWO WOULD HAVE TO BE NARROWED. BEIRUT WOULD HAVE TO BE CUT DOWN TO SIZE.

3. IN SIMILAR VEIN, MANAGING EDITOR OF AN NAHAR REPORTS HE RECENTLY HAD EBULLIENT SYRIAN OFFICIAL AS VISITOR AND ARRANGED FOR HIM TO HAVE LUNCH WITH KHALIL HADDAD, STAID DIRECTOR OF PRESIDENTIAL PROTOCOL. SYRIAN OFFENDED HADDAD
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DEEPLY BY SAYING SYRIANS WERE GOING TO GET RID OF SARKIS AND PUT SOMEONE WITH MORE SPUNK IN HIS PLACE.

4. WE REPORT ABOVE FOR THE RECORD. STATEMENTS SUCH AS THOSE DESCRIBED PARAS 2 AND 3 ARE SORT OF THING THAT CONVINCE LEBANESE SYRIANS HAVE HEGEMONY IN MIND. PARKER

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NNN

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